

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY ALLOCATES \$500,000 TOWARD MARKETING PROGRAM FOR
STATEWIDE TOURISM RECOVERY**

ASHEVILLE – Gov. Mike Easley today allocated \$500,000 to the N.C. Department of Commerce to implement a marketing program for statewide efforts to promote tourism for North Carolina communities affected by the recent storms. First Lady Mary Easley made the announcement while visiting the Thomas Wolfe Memorial in Asheville.

"Fall is the traditional 'peak season' for travel in western North Carolina and is the second most important travel season for our state," Gov. Easley said. "We do not want the unwelcome visitors, Ivan and Frances, to keep other visitors away. The special promotion will ensure visitors know North Carolina is open and ready for tourists."

The additional funds will be used to market tourism in North Carolina, focusing primarily on fall foliage, events and attractions. Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development will purchase national and regional television commercials emphasizing the state's beauty and hospitality. Radio advertisements highlighting North Carolina will also be aired in Atlanta, Ga., and Washington, D.C. The division is also running full-page ads in newspapers across the state, as well as the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, promoting fall color and contact information for the three mountain host groups and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

"We need to do everything we can to help those businesses, entrepreneurs, artisans and entire communities that are dependent on tourism, especially during the fall season," said First Lady Mary Easley. "It is essential that we get the word out that North Carolina is ready for the spectacular show that Mother Nature puts on at this time every year."

Public relations efforts will expand to complement the advertising campaign. For example, the state's tourism division will contact travel publications and draw attention to ideas for articles including the many activities, such as golf, fall fishing and festivals that visitors can enjoy during the fall season.

Led by the Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development, North Carolina has been very aggressive in building tourism as a year-round business. In 2003, North Carolina's tourism industry generated \$12.6 billion to the state's economy. North Carolina is now the sixth most visited state in the country with more than 49 million visitors annually. The tourism industry includes many small business owners, entrepreneurs and artisans who are dependent on tourism dollars as income, with many generating as much as 40 percent of their income during the fall season.

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